

“Rootless Cosmopolitans”: Jewish Musicians and displacement in the mid- 20th century

The displacement of Jewish artists in the years leading up to and including WWII had a profound affect on personal aesthetic output and material fragility of works and reputations. This session brings together academics collaborating on an Arts & Humanities Research Council (UK) large grant, “Performing the Jewish Archive”, to discuss the impact of displacement and the labelling of cosmopolitan to artists of that time. Just as the ‘cosmopolitan turn’ maybe considered in an ethical light today, its historical nomenclature during the turbulent years of the 1930s and 1940s carries a very particular meaning. If cosmopolitan can be transformed into a new way of reading ‘posta national understandings of the social in the musical past’, then this session will explore the way in which it was coa opted in ways to classify, suppress and marginalise a particular group of artists at a particular era in the 20th century, how those artists chose to respond to such a label at that time and afterwards, and how their aesthetic may have been influenced by ideas of ‘the cosmopolitan’.

Simon Pergament-Parment – between Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism

Simo Muir, School of Music, University of Leeds

Simon Pergament-Parment (1897–1969) was a Finnish composer and conductor who received his education in St. Petersburg, worked in Berlin and Helsinki in the 1920–30s, was in exile in the US during the Second World War, returning to Finland in the late 1940s. Pergament-Parment is best known in Finland for his analysis of Sibelius’s symphonies.

Pergament-Parment’s career in Finland appears to have been affected by Antisemitism. Though there were no anti-Jewish laws in independent Finland there was nevertheless institutional Antisemitism, and during the 1930s and the war-time, when Finland was de facto allied with the Third Reich, a considerable constituency of the intellectual elite was pro-Nazi-Germany.

The paper focuses on Pergament-Parment’s ideas and adherence towards cosmopolitanism, and analyses his attitudes towards Finnish as well as Jewish nationalism. The paper also explores and attempts to assess how Antisemitism in the musical circles shaped and damaged his career in Finland during his lifetime. The sources used for the paper include Pergament-Parment’s memoirs, articles, interviews and correspondence.

To stay or go: Walter Wurzburger and Werner Baer, ‘enemy aliens’ and composer-musicians

Joseph Toltz, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney

Abstract: In July 1940, HMT Dunera (a British passenger troopship) transported 2,542 ‘enemy aliens’ from Britain to Australia (approximately 80% of whom were Jewish or anti-Nazis). In Australia, the group was transported 750km to the rural town of Hay, in central New South Wales. A parallel deportation of another 300 ‘enemy aliens’ from Singapore arrived on the Queen Mary around the same time; this group was detained in Tatura, in northern Victoria.

This paper will focus on the pre-war, internment and post-war careers and musical aesthetics of two interned composer-musicians. Werner Baer's career in Berlin as organist, répétiteur and conductor was interrupted by arrest and imprisonment in Sachsenhausen; after release, he escaped to Singapore where he worked as municipal organist and a pedagogue at Raffles College before internment and transportation to Australia. His post-war contribution to musical life in Sydney was significant; as a conductor and composer, he eventually rose to the position as supervisor of music for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, retiring in 1979. Walter Wurzbürger's musical life in Frankfurt was focused more on jazz studies (under Mátyás Seiber); in 1939 he too found himself in Singapore, making the same journey as Baer. After the end of the war Wurzbürger completed a music degree, joined the teaching staff at the University of Melbourne, and returned to Europe in 1950, where he resumed studies with Seiber, continued composition and made a considerable contribution to local music in Greater London, founding the Kingston Philharmonia.

Hans Keller: A cosmopolitan in the 'Land without Music'

Daniel Tooke, School of Music, University of Leeds

The proposed paper focuses on the writing and activity of the Austro-British critic Hans Keller (1919–1985) whose extensive output touched on virtually every aspect of post-war British musical life, and arguably marked him out as the country's most influential music critic. Born into a Jewish musical family in Austria in 1919, Keller fled the Nazis after the Anschluss, and settled permanently in Britain, where he worked as a broadcaster, critic and teacher, for many years holding influential positions at the BBC.

As a transnational migrant, Keller is of particular interest: his advocacy of a wide range of Austro-German repertoire, particularly that of the Second Viennese School, bore the hallmarks of a markedly different upbringing, education and outlook to his native British colleagues. My paper will therefore seek to explore and discuss Keller's cosmopolitan critical standpoint in his comparatively inward-looking and provincial new home. Both the inferiority complex and conservatism in the musical discourse of his adopted 'Land without Music' were the subject of much interest to him, and the journal he ran with co-editor Donald Mitchell, 'Music Survey', had the explicit aim of broadening the rather narrow horizons of musical discourse in Britain. Not only did Keller introduce into this discourse a wide range of new topics, but also approached them from unusual perspectives, such as drawing extensively on Freudian psychoanalysis—my paper will therefore illustrate the remarkable breadth of Keller's thinking by drawing on a range of his postwar writings.

Dr. **Simo Muir** is Post Doctoral Research Fellow at the School of Music, University of Leeds for the AHRC “Performing the Jewish Archive” project. His area of expertise is Yiddish culture in Finland, Finnish–Jewish relations and Antisemitism in the 1930s, and the history of the Finnish Jewish community during WWII. Dr. Muir’s present research focuses on the representation of Antisemitism and the Holocaust in the performing arts of the Jewish community of Finland including Yiddish cabaret, choral and liturgical music.

Dr. **Joseph Toltz** is Research Fellow at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, and Co-Investigator for the AHRC "Performing the Jewish Archive" project. His area of expertise is music and memory in Jewish Holocaust survivors. A former fellow at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, he is completing research on the 1946 field recordings of David Boder, the David Bloch archive, and working on a project around the first published Holocaust song book (Bucharest, 1945). In August 2014 he staged the first Sydney performances of the children's opera *Brundibár*.

Daniel Tooke is a PhD student at the University of Leeds (UK), attached to the AHRCa funded Performing the Jewish Archive project. He completed his undergraduate and research masters degrees at the University of Durham (UK), writing his masters dissertation on the artistic and cultural influences